

# Saturday Review

## SRI LANKA

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Rs. 2

# Will the T. U. L. F. accept

### Editorial

#### Heroes of the North & South

Two events occurred within the last ten days—one in the South, one in the North, and both concerning undergraduates—the significance of which go beyond their mere superficial news value. The unseen hero who triggered off both events is Jaffna undergraduate Vimalarasa who has been languishing at the Army Detention Barracks at Panagoda for over one year now.

The SEEN heroes in the first event were the undergraduates in the south, particularly from the Colombo University who, in linking hands with their northern brethren, showed a sense of solidarity that is remarkable, and found a common identity that is nothing short of an act of courage. Let us remember that what they did was not an easy thing. Vimalarasa was snatched away by Army personnel in a pre-dawn swoop at 4 a.m. on 24th April 1981, and the popular misconception in the south—a misconception persistently encouraged by a section of the Sinhala and English language dailies—is that any Tamil youth taken in by the Police or Army is a "Tiger". Every arbitrary arrest, every arbitrary detention, every act of torture is given not only legal sanction under the Prevention of Terrorism Act but political sanction by the government and social sanction by an irresponsible Press and its misguided readership. It is against this oppressive background that the southern undergraduates were able to think free and act free. SATURDAY REVIEW salutes them.

The second event occurred in Jaffna on the 17th May when a 2,000-strong procession of undergrads defied a Police ban, and defied it successfully! This was a show of Direct Action and public protest which many thought was impossible—until it happened! If none of the undergrads in the south had ever set eyes on Vimalarasa, many of the Jaffna undergrads themselves had never seen or heard of this unfortunate colleague of theirs, until the Army decided his fate. He was no student leader as some newspaper in Colombo tried to make out. All they knew of him was that he came from a poor family and a large family to which he was son, brother and a bread-earner as well. But Vimalarasa, a victim of circumstances has now become the symbol, a symbol of what a tyrannical law, and a machinery of State process that is both heartless and MINDLESS can do to any youth whose life can be changed overnight by one single act of misjudgement by one man whose assets are a State-given uniform and a State-given firearm!

In acting as they did, undergraduates both in the south and north had in their different ways taught two object lessons to their respective politicians. Leaders in the south often become prisoners of mob reaction, pressure groups and mass media racism which paralyse them from pursuing a path of common identity between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, and prevent them from doing the right thing for fear of losing their electoral base. Undergrads in the south have now showed them that the right thing to do CAN BE DONE, provided you have the will to do it.

The northern undergrads have shown their own politicians that one does not have to wait for an auspicious political climate to engage in an agitational approach to the solving of problems. The T.U.L.F. leadership which has been exhibiting a state of mental paralysis and a weakened will and making out that the only thing to do, like Rotarians going to lunch, is to go to the table all the time, should take heart in seeing what these undergrads achieved on 17 May.

# District Ministers' posts ?

**Will the Tamil United Liberation Front decide to accept—if offered—District Ministerships in the areas where the TULF is in a majority ?**

This is the talking point in political circles now that the Government has decided that certain Cabinet Ministers' powers and duties will be delegated to District Ministers.

The decision was taken at the Cabinet meeting held on 19 May, after the Cabinet examined the report of the Committee of Secretaries appointed to report on the devolution of powers.

The delegated powers will relate to Agriculture, Food, Land, Education, Fisheries and Health, the SATURDAY REVIEW understands, covering 15 sectors in all.

Political observers who think it is more than likely the TULF will accept District Ministerships, point out that this is a logical step as it will help them to attain their avowed twin objectives of safe-guarding the traditional homelands of the Tamils and developing their areas: the sectors to be assigned to District Councils cover these two key objectives, they argue.

These observers also draw attention to the fact that when the District Ministerships of Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu were vacant, TULF President M. Sivathamparam had requested President J. R. Jayewardene not to fill them till TULF Secretary-General A. Amirthalingam returned from America.

At that time there was a lot of speculation that the TULF was going to accept District Ministerships but internal opposition appears to have blocked the way.

A recent speech made by Manipay's TULF MP V. Dharmalingam, a senior parliamentarian, has also fuelled speculation.

He said industrial development of the Tamil areas had taken place when G. G. Ponnambalam was Minister of Industries in the D. S. Senanayake Cabinet: a Cement Factory was put up at Kankesanthurai and a Paper Factory at Valaichenai. Since then, said Dharmalingam, the industrial development of the Tamil areas was virtually zero.

If the TULF does decide to accept District Ministerships, then its parliamentarians will replace the present UNP District Ministers of Jaffna Vavuniya, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

**They defied  
the police**  
(See page 12)



### Shouldn't every citizen know ?

In an age when the loss of human rights anywhere is considered an affront to human dignity EVERYWHERE, how can the citizens of a country be unconcerned or remain unaffected when a section of their own fellow citizens suffer persistent oppression and brutality at the very hands of the organs of State power that are meant to protect them? TENSION AND TORTURE IN VA-

VUNIYA is the title of a comprehensive report prepared by the MOVEMENT FOR INTER-RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY (MIRJE) following a visit of a MIRJE delegation to Vavuniya on the 21st and 22nd March 1982.

Beginning next week, Saturday Review brings you the full report, signed on behalf of MIRJE by Paul Caspersz and Susil G. Senaviratne.

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**Development aid to Tamil areas**

—M.P.'s report

The M.P. for Chavakachcheri, Mr. V. N. Navaratnam in submitting a report on his recent visit to Iraq and Nigeria to the TULF Branch at Chavakachcheri, said he was able to mobilise foreign financial support for the economic development of the Tamil areas.

Talking about his earlier visit abroad he said he was able to convince the US AID authorities in Washington D.C. about the importance of the Mahadeva Causeway; as a result the US AID Mission in Sri Lanka was asked to study the feasibility report of the project. The real problem of getting governmental organizations to support our economic development projects was that the aid has to come through governmental channels and there would be a fair amount of red tapism in the process.

**JAFFNA OFFICE**

Until further notice, both business and editorial offices of SATURDAY REVIEW will function temporarily from No. 66, Chapel street, Jaffna.

Telephone inquiries to KALAI NILAYAM LIMITED (7707).

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The Colombo office of the SATURDAY REVIEW will function at No. 142, New Bullers Road, Colombo 4 (Telephone 86811).

But this time, Mr. Navaratnam said, he had been able to mobilise different types of support where red tapism need not be a block. He had discussed three substantial projects with Tamils who live in these countries who were prepared to invest purely on a commercial basis.

The first of these projects would be the setting up of industrial estates and the siting of these estates in area of priority would be Trincomalee, Mannar and Jaffna.

The second project would be to put up residential buildings in Kilinochchi, Mankulam and Vavuniya to meet the acute shortage of housing in these areas.

A Tamil expatriate team in Nigeria is prepared to construct the Mahadeva Causeway on a commercial basis, on a basis of agreement with the Highway Authorities, if tax concessions could be found for a period of 20 years.

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# Political Causerie

by

Gamini Navaratne

This is the last time that I propose to write about corruption while the United National Party remains in office. For I believe I have written enough on this unpleasant subject already, starting from about six months after the UNP came to power.

Moreover, I have come to accept what the Minister of State, Mr. Anandatissa de Alwis told Parliament at the recent ceremonial session—that corruption can never be totally eliminated as long as “human frailties and human greed” existed; that “some degree of corruption” is inevitable where there is big spending, as now, on development projects; and that this evil prevailed even in the Soviet Union.

So I believe that “a little bit of corruption” is quite in order.

But, “like a little bit of dictatorship” under which we live now, the problem is where to draw the line.

The commonest corrupt practice anywhere in the world is bribery the perversion by gifts of cash or kind or other inducements the actions or judgments of persons in various positions of power and authority.

## HALF PERCENT TO 10%

Bribery operates at various levels. The award of state contracts for the supply of various goods and services or for the construction of various projects provides the most frequent and the most blatant opportunities to make fat rake-offs, especially in developing countries. For it is standard practice not only in the capitalist world, of which we are now a solid part, but also in the socialist world, to pay a percentage of the value of certain types of contracts to the awarding party.

The percentage, or commission, or “santhosam” may vary from as low as 1/2 per cent to 10 per cent or more, depending on a variety of factors, including the magnitude of the job or service and whether competition exists or not.

In almost every country it is there, this hidden cost of development, added on to almost every quotation. And it is paid to some party or other, at some level or other.

There may be cabinet sub-committees to vet every tender. And each time the award may be made to the best party possible, cost-wise quality-wise and efficiency-wise, with strict adherence to tender procedure. But

even if there is only one tenderer, the commission is usually there, for who would not like to give a reward or gift for a kind service, when the money involved runs into millions of dollars pounds or rupees.

The question is, Who is this party?

I use the word “party” because usually more than one person are involved in the award of a tender.

At the top in most countries are usually the politician or politicians who make the final decision; below them are various officials who study the quotations and make their recommendations; in the case of foreign contractors, there are also the local agents who help to put the deals through.

Of course, this is all hearsay, with no proof at all. Still, it is not entirely unimaginable or totally impossible. Say, a contract is worth Rs. 1,000 million; then, paying Rs. 100 million or “a mere 10 per cent” should be no problem, especially when the money comes out of virtually bottomless public coffers.

The Minister of State, in the speech referred to earlier, also said that his reference to “human frailties and human greed” was “not an excuse that this Government has for tolerating a system of corruption. Already, His Excellency has been empowered by the working committee of his party, by the Cabinet of his Government and the entire Parliamentary Group that we will rely upon his sole judgment and author-

had described as a “corrupt regime.”

Anyway, now that the “additional powers” have been given, let us see some heads roll, some really big ones; that is, if there indeed is any corruption in high places, as alleged by critics of the Government.

My own candid opinion is that our Government is composed for the most part by very honourable persons, aided for the most part by equally honourable officials, none of whom would tolerate any nonsense, and that all the talk of corruption is an “election goondu” of opposition forces, a repetition of what happened during the 1977 campaign.

In this context I think the recent Cabinet reshuffle, if it could be called that, was superfluous.

# How do we eliminate corruption?

Because a huge slice of the big spending by developing countries is on the procurement of foreign goods and services, some of the local agents are at the bottom of much of the corruption that exists at various levels, as they “buy up” politicians and officials.

Part of the commissions are likely to be paid abroad so that the customs examination of the baggage, or even the person, of politicians and officials as they leave their country or return serves no purpose. More refined methods are now available to transfer such money, including quiet deposits in secret Swiss Bank accounts.

Remember the Lockheed scandal which caught up with even a Japanese.

In the case of Sri Lanka I have heard whispers of one local agent who is supposed to have collected over Rs. 100 million on a development project awarded in two parts, and the loot was supposed to have been shared by a lot of friends.

ity that if he as much as suspects any of us, friend or foe, or closest contemporary or closest ally, that we will accept his verdict of our probity and sense of right and wrong and we will go. We have given to him an unparalleled privilege. I do not wish to take away the solemnity of this occasion by referring to past periods of corruption which reached the summits and when the summits were powerless and afraid to interfere! This summit is not afraid to interfere, and to this summit we give that reverence because for a hundred years to come you will not get someone in whom in your own hearts you repose a sense of confidence in his justice and impartiality.

Bravo, I say, but with a major qualification. There was no need to vest these so-called additional powers in the President, for he already possessed them in ample measure, by virtue of the massive mandate that THE PEOPLE of Sri Lanka gave the UNP in 1977 by wiping out what it

So why should I write any more about some thing that does not seem to exist?

## THE CASTE VOTE

Casteism is certain to be converted into an issue at the next election. What was said in Parliament at the last session is a pointer. Coupled with references to “family bandyism” and “walauwa people”, it could be a handy weapon in the hand of opponents of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

Come to think of it, caste has always been there just below the surface of our society, both in the South and the North. It comes to the fore occasionally, and very forcefully, as when arranging marriages—and choosing candidates! For the caste vote—that is, the votes of people who are regarded as belonging to so-called “low castes”—is a powerful factor because, taken nationally, such people are in a majority.

## FOREIGN MONEY

Another issue that may be dragged out this time is the alleged influx of foreign money to finance local political activity. There was a reference to this also in Parliament last time. But this is one issue on which no party could adopt a holier-than-thou attitude. For there are strong suspicions that various countries, through their missions in Colombo, are financing parties of their choice. This sort of thing happens in other countries, too.

Remember the late Dr. N. M. Perera’s allegation about the “misuse” of PL 480 funds by the US Embassy? Remember also the expulsion of the North Korean Embassy staff and the charges made against two Yugoslav nationals during the 1971 insurrection?

With super power rivalry in the Indian Ocean region gaining in intensity, it would be no wonder if the CIA, the KGB and their ilk became active at election-time in a bid to influence the result.

## ANOTHER SPLIT?

The splitter virus has begun to attack another party, this time the Communist Party of Sri Lanka. Sharp differences have arisen among the top leadership on whether the party should back the opposition unity moves against “the common enemy” or go it alone.

In Jaffna, there is reported to be strong support for the unity moves among the rank and file headed by a central committee member who is also a trade union organiser.

At the Cotta Road headquarters, the leaders are awaiting a signal from Moscow.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

How does one spell the “new” official name of Kotte? In President Jayewardene’s speech at the ceremonial session of Parliament, as reported in Hansard, it appears as JAYAVARDHANAPURA which, I think, is the correct form, particularly because there is no “W” in Sinhala.

But in the reported versions of almost all the other speeches that day, on the title pages of Hansard itself as also in most of the name boards in and around the parliamentary complex it appears as JAYEWARDENE-PURA, based on the spelling of the President’s name!

(Continued on page 11)

## LETTERS

55, Warren Road,  
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My dear Editor,

Where intellect cannot penetrate the innermost depths the only way out is intuition, the inner voice Mahatma Gandhi relied upon.

But the Tamil mind is said to be subtle and astute and the man himself is daringly cunning, that it is difficult for even intuition to fathom the Tamil man. Is it so?

The deeper aspects of the English character and ethos are now discernible, after the sinking of their "Sheffield" by a single Argentine missile, this week.

Like most men our Tamil man is a developed soul, basically good at heart, whether Christian, Muslim or SAIVA. But what is the one (or may be more) ingredient that marks him out as a self-seeker?—That is what one of your readers said—Your Issue No. 13 of 24-4-82, at page 11 "In defence of Ponnambalam". It says:

"Mr. Chelvanayagam and his caucus carried on a persistent campaign of vilification and character assassination against Mr. Ponnambalam just to destroy his image and gain cheap popularity. No doubt they achieved this objective but it was done at the expense of the Tamil Community. They perpetrated a fraud on the Tamil community...."

Can such an accusation be made even against a person of Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayagam's lotus-standing?

It is indeed a self-destroying process as a nation if friends like Mr. Vinayagamoorthy still assess leaders like Chelva in these terms. Something has gone berserk in his assessment.

What a thing to say about the great and sweet soul Chelva—How could someone bring pen to paper to write such things?

True, I myself contested him in the 1965 elections as the official United Left Front candidate—incidentally Mr. Amirthalingam sarcastically rai's at meetings against me for contesting Chelva, as he has nothing else to say. Oh No! As I write this I understand that a statement was issued by him to the "VIRAKESARI" implying that I am not daring enough to come to Ceylon to make the Tamil

# Tamil ethos and the Eelam demand

**Eelam Independence Declaration. Come on Mr. A. what else the TULF leadership is there for?**

It is true we of the Left were opposed to the FP those days because we believed that the Sinhala people were sensible enough and determined enough to support leaders like Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, Pieter Keuneman, Colvin R de Silva, Dr. N. M. Perera and others. So that the Sinhala and the Tamil people could continue to live in peace and amity.

We were following leaders such as P. Kandiah, Communist MP (Point Pedro).

But when respected Sinhala Left leaders ate their own words and became chauvinistic to the point of denying the Tamils their just rights, then some of us like Motilal Nehru (Pt. Pedro) and myself resigned in protest from the Communist Party.

What is the Sinhala ethos that made their own Socialist leaders to become, in effect, anti-TAMIL?

And here comes the Tamil ethos—to pursue and achieve your immediate objective, to what extent will you go to criticise and even condemn those you imagine to be your opponents? We all know that there are only two things in life which are certain—one is criticism and the other, death!

To defend Ponna, we need not attack Chelva! Don't you readers agree? After all, they themselves made it up and later that is how Mr. Amirthalingam himself was defended by them in the Trial-at-Bar case.

In my experience—I have visited many countries in the world including USSR and China (1952) and always made it a point to observe

things closely and carefully but quietly and unobtrusively as to what goes on inside, and also of the behind-the-scene activities.

(Incidentally, it is the correct combination of this knowledge and the day-to-day background working that made me dare and catapult myself—so to say—in front of the Podium in the Rostrum of the United Nations General Assembly — 5-10-78).

Many Tamils possess these qualities—may be in varying degrees depending on their age and circumstances. The point is: What about the Sinhalese? What about the rest of humanity?

You all know that human nature is the same—I confirm this, as I said earlier having lived and moved with people in every Continent.

But still is there anything peculiar to the Tamils? We

are proud about Mohenjodaro and Harappa, Valluvar and Avvai, Karikalan and Rajaraja Cholan, Kamban and Ilango and also of Bnarathi and Anna—But what is it that has clicked much smaller nations—in area, population-wise to stand out as leading Nations?

I can sense and feel that the trend in the present mood of the TAMIL ethos is for acceleration of our activities towards the sovereignty of TAMIL EELAM. What took place on the 29th April and on May Day this year in our Tamil areas is a sure indication that the TULF leadership has ceased to represent the TAMIL Nation.

The Tamil people will no doubt rally round organizations such as the TAMIL EELAM LIBERATION FRONT.

Krishna Vaikunthavasan

## WORLD TITBITS

### B. B. C. hits back

The British Broadcasting Corporation has hit back at critics of its coverage of the Falklands crisis.

Assistant Director General Alan Trotheroe said that the B.B.C. journalists needed no lessons on patriotism from the Members of Parliament.

He was replying to protests from Conservative MPs against what is described as "Pro-Argentine anti-British" coverage of the events. Meanwhile Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher told the House of Commons that the BBC could not remain neutral in the reports it gives on the crisis.

### Billy Graham in Russia

Rev. Billy Graham preached in the Soviet Union for the first time last week condemning the evils of sin and the threat of nuclear war.

Many in the congregation had only a vague idea who Billy Graham really was but his forceful style of speech drew praise. His words were translated into Russian by an English-speaking senior Pastor of the Baptist Congregation.

### Waldheim hit by a tram

Former United Nations Secretary General Kurt Waldheim was knocked down by a tram in Vienna last week and taken to hospital with a concussion. Police said Mr. Waldheim, 63, was walking in Central Vienna when the accident occurred.

### Falklands jumped the gun

The Falkland Islands has signed up to compete in the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Australia—in the shooting competition! The Falklands application had gone before the current crisis erupted.

### Nepal moots Hindu centre

Swami Yogi Naraharanath, head of the Gorakhnath Mutt, Nepal, who led the eleven-member Nepali delegation to the recent World Hindu Conference in Sri Lanka has invited representatives from ten countries to serve on the preparatory committee for the establishment of a World Hindu Centre. The meeting would also decide where the proposed World Hindu Centre should be located. Sri Lanka is among the ten countries invited to join the committee.

### Asia's biggest telescope

Asia's biggest optical telescope which will enhance the research capability of Indian astro-physicists is likely to be commissioned at Kavalur in Tamil Nadu, South India. The tower for the 234-cm telescope was being got ready.

### From Madras to Ratmalana

A direct speech circuit between Air Traffic Controls of the Madras Air Port and Ratmalana Air Port (Colombo) was commissioned

early this month to ensure greater safety of air travel between India and Sri Lanka. The new circuit will provide instantaneous communication between the Air Traffic Controls at Madras and Ratmalana Air Ports, according to a report in the "Hindu".

### Biggest man on a bike

Lieutenant General H. M. Ershad, the Chief Martial Law administrator in Bangladesh recently rode a bicycle to his office from his residence, wearing his formal uniform and carrying a baton in his hand. Members of the armed forces have decided to get their official vehicles off the road whenever Gen. Ershad decides to cycle to his office.

### Madras reader on Hindu meet

A reader of the Indian Express, K. S. Venkateswaran of Madras 75, writing to that paper in its issue of May 8 says, "The World Hindu Conference held recently in Colombo was nothing more than a Government function. A lot of money was spent to achieve nothing....."

## The 1982 Chelvanayakam Memorial Lecture



Prof. Arasaratnam

# A Historical foundation of the Economy of the Tamils of North Ceylon (Continued)

(Continued from  
last issue)

In the previous lecture, I argued that the outlines of economic activity in the Jaffna peninsula as it developed in contemporary lines began to take shape in the 18th century. Both its strengths and its weaknesses were clearly demonstrable. Among its strengths were a well-established system of small-holding cultivation, a tendency towards diversification to cash crops and production for a market, availability of a skilled and unskilled labour force and money wages adequate to attract and keep such labour, a reasonably brisk trading activity from a few of the port outlets and a small entrepreneurial class drawn from a variety of communal groups acting in competition and in concert. Among its weaknesses were the restrictions on free trade imposed by a mercantilist colonial government, the fragility of the large paddy farming sector, the increasing dependence on imported rice, the vulnerability caused by a dependence on export markets for the cash crops and a rising population in a limited land area. Despite the undisputed evidence of declining standards of living towards the end of the 18th century, in relation to conditions in the rest of the island, Jaffna still had the reputation of an orderly economy out of which the state could take its legitimate pickings. Lord Hobart's famous Minute has this to say on Jaffna

A most minute examination into the revenues of the province of Jaffnapatnam would be desirable, it being a fact perfectly well known, that Jaffna was the part of the Island where the servants of the Dutch Company made the largest, the most rapid fortunes.

## MAXIMUM REVENUE

As in the case of the Dutch, it is clear that the gathering of revenue to the maximum limit possible was the prime concern of the new government that took over the administration.

## POPULATION IN THE 19TH / 20TH CENTURIES

The population of the administrative district of Jaffna has been expanding at an uneven rate and a close study of this demography is necessary to set the stage for an understanding of the area's economy. As argued earlier, the figure of 123,188 for the entire commandement of Jaffnapatnam in 1827 was an undercount as shown from the evidence of earlier and later censuses. It is possible to get a clearer picture of demographic movement from 1871 onwards when decennial censuses are held. In the first major and detailed census of 1871, the Jaffna district had a population of 276,063 and of a total island population of 2,400,380. The district had a crude density of 200 persons per square mile but this conceals the fact that the district consisted of Poonery and Thunukkai outside the peninsula. The district is thus divisible into two regions, an arid sparsely populated one with 15 persons per square mile and a densely settled heart of the peninsula with 700 persons per square mile. In terms of density per cultivated square mile, the Jaffna district even then was the first in the whole island, with 1616 people.

## THE 1881 CENSUS

In the next census ten years later (1881), the population of the district had increased to 295,583, an increase of 19,520 persons or 7.9%. This increase compares with an all-island population increase of 15% during this period but this of course is largely caused by immigration from India which did not affect the Jaffna peninsula. During the next ten year period (1881-1891) the rate of increase of the Jaffna population was even lower. There were 13,701 people more in 1891 than in 1881, thus a 5.1% increase as compared with 7.9% over the previous period. Even the all-island increase is lower now than it had been earlier 9% as compared with 15%. During the next ten year period (1891-1901) the increase was 21,567 persons

and 7.7%. This compares with an all-island growth rate of 18.6%, again these being years of large migration movement from India. In the next ten years (1901-1911), the population of Jaffna increased by 25,861 people or 8.5% as compared with an all-island rate of 15.2%. This was the highest rate of increase since the decennial censuses were begun. The following ten years (1911-1921) see the worst rates of increase for many years, there being only 3,829 people more in 1921 than in 1911 and the rate of increase was 1.1% as compared with an all-island rate of 9.6%. The situation reverts to normal in 1921 to 1931 when there are 24,884 more people and a growth rate of 7.5% as compared with an all-island rate of 18%. The ten year

reduction in rate and can be related to continuing crop failures, insufficient rain and sickness. This is even more acute in the period 1911 to 1921 when annual growth is down to 0.1%. These are also years of epidemics, crop failures and shortages caused by the first world war. During this period also begins to occur the migration of Tamils southwards and to British Malaya and the Straits Settlements. For the first time in the 20th century a net inflow into the Jaffna district was registered in 1946 and this was probably caused by repatriation immediately before and after the second world war. This process is reversed again in the census of 1953. The high rates of growth from the 1930's are the result of

these fringe areas that are seen to be worst affected. Sickness, epidemics and malnutrition take their toll and there is also migration away from these villages. Something of this has been happening in the islands as well.

## BRITISH POLICIES

During the first decade of the new British administration, there was continuity in policies and aims. The maximization of revenues was the government's prime concern and the tax squeeze on Jaffna and its inhabitants imposed by the Dutch was continued. This multitude of taxes were farmed out annually and in the early years of British rule resulting in ever increasing revenue. The increasing population and the removal of some of the previous trade restrictions appear to have resulted in a quickening of economic activity, at least as judged from the increased value of the tax farms. Thus in 1796/97, the tax farms realised Rs.225,000, an increase on the previous year and considerably higher than they had been under the Dutch. A number of export and import duties had been abolished, though the major duty on tobacco was retained. The reduction of duties and the freeing of trade had resulted in some trade expansion, though there were other conditions that impeded trade.

Gradually over the first few decades, the British began to change the administrative structure, taxation methods and economic policies. The system of tax farming was gradually abandoned with the simplification of the fiscal system, a process that was culminated with the radical reforms recommended by the Colebrooke Commission. When the farming of governmental share of the land revenue was abolished, taxes were paid direct to government officers and a large administrative machinery came into existence. The previous revenue farmers, scions of influential families in the villages, now became revenue collecting and civilian officers under the direction of European civil servants. This excluded chetty and Muslim tax.

(To be continued)

## Part II — The 19th and 20th centuries

census due in 1941 was not conducted because of the war and in the first post-war census held in 1946, 15 years after the previous one, there were 67,052 more people in the Jaffna district, a growth of 19.5% or a mean annual rate of 1.3% which was the highest annual birth rate on record so far. This compares with the all-island growth rate of 25.4% thus bringing the Jaffna rates somewhat more approximate to the rest of the island. The next census was taken in 1956, seven years after the previous one and now there were 76,052 more people, that is 15.7% increased and a mean annual rate of 2.2%, the highest ever on record.

## LAG OF POPULATION GROWTH

A number of factors serve to explain this lag of population growth in Jaffna as compared to the rest of the island, beside the one major phenomenon of immigration noted above. Indeed it is possible to relate population growth to economic, climatic and health crises experienced in the north of the island. In the 20th century, there is also the phenomenon of emigration that is beginning to occur. In the 1880's, population growth suffers a

the extension of rural and environmental health and the increasing money in circulation in the peninsula as a result of remittances from those working outside.

Up to 1946, the increase in population was largely absorbed by the older settled areas of the peninsula. Thus the divisions of Vadamarachi, Valikamam West and Valikamam North have a density of population of 1,000 to 2,000 per square mile. The Jaffna town and the surrounding division was always a growth area, absorbing people when conditions in the surrounding country were depressed. The Jaffna division had in 1946 a density of 4,000 per square mile. The Valikamam East division came next with a density of 500 to 1,000 per square mile followed by Tenmarachi with 400 to 500 per square mile. The very sparsely populated divisions of Pachilapalai and Punakari had a density of less than 50 per square mile. This trend is reversed, however, after 1946 when Pachilapala and Karachi show marked increases, largely the result of resettlement, colonization and desalination schemes in these divisions. In periods of depression and failure of monsoons, it is

## From the pages of Hansard - 50 YEARS AGO

Debates in the Legislative  
Council of Ceylon - Thursday  
November 15, 1928

# the First FRANCHISE debate

The Hon. Mr. A. F. MOLAMURE—Sir, it now becomes my duty to reply to the various criticisms that have been levelled at the motion standing in my name. I feel that there has been a great deal of impatience not only among my honourable friends, but also among the public that this debate should come to an end and that a decision should be taken; but, however much I would wish to respect their wishes, there are one or two points which require an explanation from me, and one or two points that require a reply from me. Therefore I beg the indulgence of Honourable Members to bear with me a little longer and to give me also a patient hearing in the very few remarks I am going to make.

### IN A PHALANX AGAINST SINHALESE

This debate has been long drawn out, and the result is almost a foregone conclusion. From the various remarks that we have heard one is able to gather that the Honourable Members representing the minority communities are welded together as one whole as regards one aspect of this resolution. As regards the other aspect, the female aspect, with the exception of one or two diehards, the rest are unanimous that the vote should be extended to those between the ages of twenty - one and thirty. Therefore, I feel that it is useless trying any further to change the minds of those who have already formed their opinions, and it only remains for me to explain the resolution that stands in my name, because I feel that that resolution has not been thoroughly understood by very many Members and by very many outside this House who are taking a very keen interest in this debate. Whether it is a misunderstanding of my motion or the motives, whatever they may be, that weighs with my honourable friends—and it is not for me to question their motives, for are they not all honourable men?—it is wonderful to see Honourable Members of the minority communities in a phalanx standing against the one and only major community, the Sinhalese. It is a lesson which I think the members of the major community will take to heart once and for

all. I feel that since our entry into this Council, in the last four years, this is the only occasion on which the Sinhalese as a body have stood together, with one exception, the Honourable Member for Chilaw, not in a minor matter of detail or business, but have stood together, rightly or wrongly from their point of view, in order to safeguard the interests not only of the Sinhalese, but of this country itself. It is wonderful, at such a time as this for the Sinhalese to find all their brethren who have avowed from time to time sentiments of friendship and affection and various other sentiments, stand up against them for reasons which are best known to them. It is a lesson which we the Sinhalese community will take to heart, and what is more, I sincerely trust that we the Sinhalese community will never forget.

Coming to the subject, I wish first of all to deal with the point which is least controversial, that is the question of female franchise. I was sorry that during this debate the gallery was bereft of the fair ones of this Island, but to-day I see many here who are interested in the subject. I was wondering whether they deserved the vote when they showed no interest in the subject, but looking at the gallery to-day I am constrained to come to the conclusion that a good many of them are interested. There is practical unanimity that

rectitude and high ability of the women of this country to exercise this high privilege. I have not the slightest doubt that they will call to their aid the sense that we have not, namely, intuition. Whether he be fair, whether he be ugly, they will plump for the right man. It is a right which I know they will hold sacred and in honour just like the very many things that are honoured by the women of this country. I was glad to hear it said that at the next reforms we shall find that the women have exercised the vote in a fa-

Hon. Mr. Balasingham—who said that I made lucid and exhaustive speeches. On this occasion it seems to me that in spite of the lucid speech I made I have been misunderstood.

I have been looked upon in very many guises. Some call me an arm-chair politician, others call me a lawyer politician, still others call me a plutocrat politician, and others call me a planter politician. I really do not know which of those names I deserve, because I do not know whether I am a politician at all. Perhaps it is due to the views I have taken and not to my achievements in this Council. As regards my being a planter politician—I have been recently named that—I do not know whether I deserve to be called that. I am not a great planter; I do not own many estates, but on those I have, I have done the work with my own hands. I have been suspected because I own a couple of hundred acres of rubber and a few acres of coconut. I do not employ a single Tamil labourer on my estate. I never employed a single Tamil labourer and I hope I never shall, not because I have any antipathy towards Tamil labourers but because I wish to employ my own people.

‘ I never employed a Tamil labourer ... because I wish to employ my own people ’

As to my being a plutocrat I am by no means that. I live by the sweat of my brow. All these things have been said about me to show as one paper said, that I belong to a coterie of gentlemen in this Council who are out to hound the Indian out of Ceylon. If my motion is understood as I shall explain it, it will be seen that I am one of the last who will try to do that.

## Francis Molamure on the polarisation of the Sinhalese and the minorities

Before I go on to touch on the subject, I should like to congratulate two of my honourable friends in this House, the two Indian Members, who have the question of the franchise most at heart, for the very dignified and amiable manner in which they spoke. They did not try to bring down the debate to a low level. The First Indian Member spoke in a dignified and able manner, and the Second Indian Member spoke in a very open-hearted manner and laid some home truths before us. I am sorry to have to say it, but I cannot congratulate all the other Honourable Members on the level of their speeches. Some Honourable Members drew a red herring across the trail and entirely forgot the seriousness of the subject and tried to bring this debate to such a low level as to appeal to the sentiments and not to the reasoned opinions of one's mind. I shall refer to them later. Some of us have realized the seriousness of this issue, and we have debated in that spirit.

the vote should be extended to females and that the disqualification imposed on them by the Donoughmore Commissioners should be removed and that they should be allowed to vote in the same way as the other members of the public. There are only two or three diehards who do not want to see the franchise extended to women or even if it is extended to see it given with a small hand. I refer to the Honourable Member for the Northern Province, Western Division, who wishes to see it extended to those who have passed the English School-Leaving Certificate Examination. That examination was introduced about five years ago, and therefore, how many in this Island can be possessing that certificate? It would have been better to have said “I am against the grant of the franchise to all women” than to want to give it to at most one hundred women. I do not wish to dilate on this point any further, but I wish to say that the male populace of this country trust in the

better way than the men have done.

I come to the other part of my motion, and I should like. . . Shall we adjourn now Sir?

The Hon. The VICE-PRESIDENT:— If you are going on to a new point. Council will now adjourn till 3 o'clock.

Council adjourned accordingly.

Council resumed at 3 p.m.

The Hon. Mr. A. F. MOLAMURE:— Sir, when we adjourned for lunch I was just going to deal with the second part of my motion which concerns non-Ceylonese. It is a matter of regret to me that this part of my motion has not been understood by some and misunderstood with a purpose by others. I say so advisedly because I feel that the motion as it stands on the Agenda Paper is really simple English and nothing more. I feel all the more aggrieved because on the other hand certain very nice compliments have been paid me by my honourable friend on my left—the

The strange thing about Indian civilisation is that it is essentially the only one from the Ancient World which never broke under the successive assaults of conquerors. China and Japan kept the conquerors out for the most part and isolated themselves from outside influence, only to change with startling and dangerous rapidity as soon as the barriers went down. India let the foreigners in, assimilated them and sent them on their way again. Where else have Islam and Christianity, those two most destructive and militantly jealous religions, passed through and left the old religion flourishing? It is as if the gods of Ancient Greece had survived and developed up to the present day.

The Arts Council's exhibition of Indian painting and sculpture—the centrepiece of the Festival of India—is not arranged art-historically and is not concerned with aesthetics. Things from the 2nd century BC are found alongside things from the 11th century AD, those of the 5th century AD with those of the 18th. Many of the objects are incidentally beautiful, but their function in the exhibition is to express some aspect—philosophical, religious, mythological or social—of a complete culture. One comes away ignorant of the name of any single artist but considerably more aware of what the exhibition's subtitle calls 'the Indian perception of the Universe'.

#### THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT

This perception, unlike most of the religions and philosophies of the West—except perhaps Schopenhauer's, which owed a good deal to India—embraces this world quite as wholeheartedly as the next. Nature and man's nature in particular are not regarded as obstacles to the good life, but on the contrary as recognised stages in its achievement. Can we even now, puritans to the bone if outwardly emancipated, conceive of 'the acquisition of wealth, advantage and power' or sexual pleasure being morally as well as actually good? The Indians can. Under the headings of *artha* and *kama* respectively they are elements of the second and third goals of life. True, all three of the main Indian religions—Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism—offer eventual liberation from this world and life to those who wish to find it, but the great difference is that it is an option, not an edict. I am not suggesting, nor is this exhibition or its wide-ranging and well-stocked catalogue, that we should all



*Nataraja, Polonnaruwa, 11th c. A. D., believed to be one of the largest in the world (4 ft. 8 ins. high)*

# The dancing Gods

**John Spurling**

at the Festival of India, London

New Statesman

at once become Hindus, Buddhists or Jains; the point is that we are not being shown simply a collection of art objects or even, as in the recent Great Japan Exhibition at the R.A., the remains of a civilisation, but introduced to a mode of understanding which in some ways is more primitive, in other ways more advanced than our own, and which above all coheres, so that it really doesn't signify whether what we are seeing is 200 or 2000 years old.

The exhibition's design is unfortunately not on a level with its conception or content. It is divided into compartments for the various sections and sub-sections—The Abundance of Life, Devotion, Enlightenment, Snake Deities, Court Life, Vishnu, Krishna, etc.—each compartment being walled in loose cotton hangings of various colours, from shades of brown and dark red on the ground floor devoted to earthly things; through yellow and terra-cotta on the mezzanine devoted to ascetics, temples and images of the Buddha and the Jain saints; to orange and blue for the Hindu gods on the top floor. But the effect of

the loose drapes and the various plinths and embrasures is obtrusively heavy and artificial, suggesting an old-fashioned department store more than a temple, and the sculptures seem too crowded and plonked down, not as if they were images of grace and power but as if they had been plundered at random and were waiting in some warehouse to be carried off to a foreign museum. The lighting is also inappropriate, picking out here and there a special piece (perhaps for those visitors who like to pause only in front of the really important cultural objects), making Hollywood rainbows over the symbolic egg-shaped stones with which the exhibition and Indian culture begin; otherwise rather dim, but suddenly going wild on the top floor with a kinetic shadow-show on the wall behind the wonderful tenth-century bronze of Nataraja, Lord of the Dance. As though Nataraja, perfectly poised at the centre of his circle of time, right foot on the back of a squirming dwarf representing unenlightened man, left leg raised and extended across the body towards eternity and the freedom of the spirit, four arms variously symbolic and undulating like

his snaky headgear, were not already the very incarnation—in the catalogue's phrase—of 'the measured rhythms of the universe'.

The sculptures outweigh the paintings in every sense. Some of the paintings show aspects of the religious life—yogis and worshippers, stories from mythology—but most are connected with the life of the court—portraits of rulers, scenes of hunting, warfare, love-making, diplomacy etc. Charming and sophisticated as many of them are, they are fundamentally still illustrations, luxurious accompaniments to life or literature rather than first-hand explorations of the mind or the emotions. There is nothing like looking at a plot of Indian paintings for making one appreciate the European Renaissance. But of course the emphasis in this exhibition is more on variety of subject-matter than on individual quality and, no doubt because there is to be a special exhibition devoted to Mughal Art at the V & A in three weeks' time, there is a preponderance here of the somewhat cruder and more provincial work of Rajasthan and the Deccan. The most lively paintings are of lovers or ladies waiting for their lovers, but even in a scene such as *Radha and Krishna in a Bower*, where

though, are the images of the Buddha and the Jain *Tirthankaras* (saints), since here movement and earthly sensuality are excluded by the very nature of the subject. The naked *Tirthankaras* are posed in stiff frontal postures arms stretched down at the sides, heads up, feet together, like youths attending an army medical. For someone accustomed to the lissom athleticism of the Hindu gods their peculiar power must consist in the deliberate absence of movement. The Hindus responded to the rise of Buddhism by assimilating the Buddha into their system as an incarnation of Vishnu, but the images of the Buddha and his followers, although they have clearly come from the same world as the Hindu gods, are even further beyond it than the *Tirthankaras*. Squarely but not rigidly set on both feet, very slightly inclined at the waist as if about to stoop towards the worshipper, arms held in relaxed gestures of reassurance, naked or transparently draped, but sexless, these figures recall movement and sensuality in the very act of transcending them.

'They carry

on dancing.

It's a

treat to

watch

them at it'

The more ancient Hindu gods are on the ground floor with the natural world of plants, animals and men to which, like the giants in Greek myth, they belong. The gods on the top floor, the young Olympians as it were, are more confusing, since they are apt to go about on earth under a variety of pseudonyms and disguises and their myths and symbols are as ramified and multifarious as those of the Mediterranean gods or the Christian saints and martyrs who supplanted them. But they all, even the Seven Mothers, spread out in line like a Can-Can chorus, and Ganesha the elephant god, dancing on his hind legs with his fat belly rolling, give an impression of foot-tapping energy and perpetual motion. The temporary oasis of calm on the mezzanine floor with the Buddha and the *Tirthankaras* begins to seem a little foreign to this extraordinary race, as indeed historically it turned out to be, for despite the experience of every other ancient culture, Shiva (who is also Nataraja, Lord of the Dance) and the Seven Mothers and Ganesha simply carried on dancing. It's a treat to see them at it.

# The I. C. J. Report

(Continued from  
last issue)

The South African Act, like the Sri Lankan Act, is retroactive. Similarly to the Sri Lankan Act, it permits prolonged detention without access to legal counsel on suspicion of commission of an offence. In language similar to the Sri Lanka Act it provides that the Commissioner of Police may detain terrorists or persons with information concerning offences under the Act "at such place... and subject to such conditions" as the Commissioner may determine, subject to the directions of the Minister of Justice. The South African Act permits indefinite detention; the Sri Lankan Act limits detention to 18 months.

## 'MUST SHOCK THE CONSCIENCE'

Section 11 of the Sri Lankan Act permits the Minister, if he has reason to believe or suspect that any person is connected with any "unlawful activity," to restrict the residence, employment, movement and activities of such person for periods up to 18 months. Any person who violates such restrictions shall be guilty of an offence and liable to imprisonment for a period of five years (Section 12). This provision, as yet not applied in Sri Lanka, is reminiscent of the notorious "banning orders" permitted under South African legislation.

The South African Terrorism Act has been called "a piece of legislation which must shock the conscience of a lawyer." Many of the provisions of the Sri Lankan Act are equally contrary to accepted principles of the Rule of Law.

While a substantial number of the provisions of the Terrorism Act are clearly contrary to internationally accepted minimum standards for criminal procedure, they also appear to be contrary to the provisions of the Sri Lankan Constitution which provide that every person held in custody or detained shall be brought before the judge of the nearest competent court and shall be held in custody or detained only on the order of the judge (Article 13 (2)). The Constitution forbids retroactive criminal offences and penalties (Article 13 (6)). Article 15 (7) of the Constitution, however, provides that the exercise and operation of the fundamental rights recognized in Article 13 *inter alia*, "shall be sub-

## Historical background to the present ethnic conflict

(continued) (10th weekly instalment)

### Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka: Report of a Mission to Sri Lanka in July-August 1981 on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists by Professor Virginia A. Leary.

ject to such restrictions as may be prescribed by law in the interests of national security, public order and the protection of public health or morality, or for the purpose of securing due respect for the rights and freedoms of others, or of meeting the just requirements of the general welfare of a democratic society."

Prevention of Terrorism Act was declared an urgent Bill and rushed through Parliament without the opportunity for public discussion or debate or for any challenge to its constitutional validity.

### APPLICATION OF THE TERRORISM ACT; HABEAS CORPUS HEARINGS

Twenty-seven Tamils were detained as of the end of August 1981 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. They had been held since April in Panagoda Army Camp as suspects in a bank robbery in Neerveli in March 1981. Nine persons were detained in previous years under the Act but were

of Internal Security. The undersigned ICJ observer was present in court for part of the hearings. On the first day of the hearings, the three member Court consisting of the President, Justice Percy Colin-Thome, Justice Parinda Ranasinghe and Justice D. Athukorale, ordered the Army to bring detainees into court and to permit them to consult lawyers. This was the first opportunity provided to the detainees to consult lawyers in the three months since their arrest. It was also the first opportunity for family members to see the detainees since the arrest. The detainees were brought to the Court by army officers who were ordered to withdraw from the courtroom after objections by one of the attorneys for petitioners. Numerous members of the armed forces remained in the courtyard during the trial.

The petitioners were represented at the hearing by a team of respected lawyers led by a distinguished advocate, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva. The lawyers did not argue for the release of the detainees but asked that they be removed from the custody of the Army and placed in the custody of the Court, relying on the section of Article 141 of the Constitution which permits the Court to "otherwise deal with such person (detained) according to law."

Dr. de Silva contended that a detainee could be considered to have been "improperly detained" when he had been subjected to assaults and torture while in custody, had been arrested without a warrant and without being informed of the reasons for his arrest, or had been held without a valid order from the Minister. He also argued that the Minister must have an objective basis for his "reason to believe or suspect that any person is connected with or concerned in any unlawful activity as required for detention under the Act. He argued that when two constructions may be placed on a statute, such as the Terrorism Act, the construction most in harmony with fundamental freedoms should be accepted. Hence the Act should not be interpreted in such a way as to infringe on rights guaranteed in the Constitution.

The Deputy Solicitor General, Tilak Marapane, arguing on behalf of the respondents, police and army

officials, contended that the detainees were held under valid ministerial orders and that the Minister had an objective basis for his reason "to believe or suspect" that the detainees were connected with unlawful activities. The Deputy Solicitor General presented the information on which the Minister had relied to the Court. In the main, the evidence relied upon appeared to consist of allegations that the four detainees were close associates of persons known to have been connected with the bank robbery or allegations that they were members of an organization attempting to bring about the separate State of Eelam through violence.

## 'No convictions have ever been made under the Act'

The petitioners were ably represented at the hearing and the trial was conducted with judicial propriety by Mr. Justice Colin-Thome, President of the Court of Appeal. The hearings were reported extensively in the press.

The judgement of the Court was rendered on September 10 when the undersigned was no longer in Sri Lanka.

The Court of Appeal unanimously refused the application for writs of habeas corpus, but directed that lawyers should have access to the detainees at the Panagoda Army Camp and that the Judicial Medical Officer or his Deputy should examine each of the detainees once a week. The Court stated that its refusal to remand the detainees to custody with other prisoners was in the detainees' own interest in view of "recent disturbances". The Court also found that the Minister had sufficient reasons for the making of the detention orders and that valid detention orders were ultimately made which remedied defective early orders. Hence, the detainees were validly held under the Terrorism Act.

(To be continued)

## Prevention of Terrorism Act: Its similarity to the South African Terrorism Act '67

There is no provision for judicial review of the constitutionality of laws in Sri Lanka after they have been enacted by Parliament. The ordinary procedure for testing the constitutionality of laws occurs before an Act is adopted. Article 121 of the Constitution provides that the President or any citizen may ask the Supreme Court for its judgment as to the constitutionality of a Bill within one week of the Bill being placed before Parliament. The Supreme Court is to make its decision known to the President and the Speaker within three weeks. Bills which are determined to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court may not be passed. In the case of a Bill which is considered by the Cabinet to be an "urgent" Bill, however, the Supreme Court is to make its determination within 24 hours and there is no provision for reference to the Supreme Court by citizens. The

eventually released. No convictions have ever been made under the Act.

Soon after the arrest of the Tamils currently in detention, petitions for writs of habeas corpus for four of the detainees were filed in the Court of Appeal by their relatives under Article 141 of the Constitution. This Article provides that the Court may issue writs of habeas corpus to bring before the Court...

"(b) the body of any person illegally or improperly detained in public or private custody and to discharge or remand any person so brought up or otherwise deal with such person according to law."

The hearing on the petitions for habeas corpus opened on July 27, three months after the arrests. The hearings concerned the legality of the arrests of the detainees, allegations that they were severely tortured and the validity of detention orders made by the Minister



An Indian national, Cheliah Vethamaniccam who was on remand over a period of four months facing a charge of fishing in Sri Lanka territorial waters was acquitted by the High Court Judge, Jaffna, Mr. M. Jameel.

Vethamaniccam who was the Master of an Indian fishing trawler was taken into custody by Sri Lanka Navy along with five others. They were produced before Mr. Jameel who released five of the crew and remanded S. Vethamaniccam. Since none of Vethamaniccam's relations from India turned up to bail him out although bail was ordered in a sum of Rs. 5000/- subsequently and since there was no one to defend him the Bar Association of Jaffna came forward to provide free legal aid on 26-3-82.

Mr. R. Balasubramaniam, Attorney-at-Law and Secretary of the Bar Association of Jaffna appeared and pressed for a discharge as the State had not taken steps to file an indictment. The State Counsel moved for a final date and time was given till 12th April, 1982. The indictment was filed on that date and trial fixed for 5th May.

According to Mr. Ranjit Wettawa a Lieutenant in the Sri Lanka Navy, he arrested Vethamaniccam with a load of fish—some living and some dead. According to him it was within territorial waters.

# Tamil indictment prevails, holds Jaffna judge

## Indian fisherman acquitted

Mr. Balasubramaniam submitted:

1. The indictment in Tamil was defective and therefore bad in law as the charge of fishing was not mentioned.

2. Even if the charge was in order there was no direct evidence of fishing according to the evidence of the prosecution witnesses.

3. The circumstantial evidence also cannot be accepted as the story of some fish which was alive was being told for the first time in Court and not given in the first statement.

4. The marking by the Lieutenant had not been taken at the time of arrest and therefore the prosecution had not proved that the boat

was arrested in Sri Lankan waters.

### The official language

Senior State Counsel Mr. P. S. Gunasekera submitted that the official language is Sinhala and that the correct charge in the Sinhala indictment would cure the defect in the Tamil version.

### Responsibility of the state

The Judge Mr. M. Jameel in acquitting Vethamaniccam said that he was unable to accept this argument. The question of prejudice apart, the language of the courts in the Northern Province was Tamil. The accused was an Indian, Tamil-speaking. He

was served with the Tamil version of the indictment and his lawyer was a Tamil. There was in fact even no reason, leave alone necessity for them to have read—if they could—or have read and translated to them the Sinhala indictment. It would be unreasonable to hold that notwithstanding the fact that they were Tamil speaking and that the language of the Court in that area was Tamil, that merely because they were served with a Sinhala copy of the indictment that they should read it and see whether

the Tamil indictment served on them was on all fours with the Sinhala version. The State must take responsibility for any discrepancy between the two versions and not the accused.

The Judge held that the charge had not been proved beyond reasonable doubt and that in any event the charge was bad and irremediable.

Senior State Counsel Mr. P. S. Gunasekera with Messrs. Anil Silva and S. Sriskandarajah appeared for the prosecution.

Mr. R. Balasubramaniam, Attorney-at-Law assisted by S. Ponniah appeared for the accused.

Saturday Review understands that while the accused was on remand the Rotary Club of Jaffna provided clothing and looked after the interests of the accused.

## What is the Tamil problem?

At a recent seminar on the Education White Paper, a retired educationist expressed the view that British rule saw the introduction of the rule of law and formal education. What is presupposed is that Jaffna society in pre-British times remained in a chaotic state and the people were living in a state of darkness. In short, it was a form of a belated testimonial by her majesty's loyal subject, who would vouch for the earnestness of the 'White man's burden'. Some historians would piece together available evidence and assert that the Dutch were even better and that they were motivated by nobler ideals. Not to be outdone, those accepting the authority of Queyroz, would say that the Portuguese were the noblest of all and that the role of their convicts with guns was a necessary evil in the task of civilising the natives.

This is an age of advertising agencies. Soviet and Chinese books and propaganda material are recom-

mended for public consumption by what are alleged to be pro-Moscow or pro-Peking marxist groups. Of course the distributors do get a sizeable commission. Leaders often shuttle across to and from the patron-cities promoting fraternal goodwill. Bodily ailments are also attended to in the process.

The American lobby has a longer history and apt

by **V. Ramakrishna**

to employ more refined techniques. They seem to have a firm base among sections of the English-educated and operate through established institutions.

Since state power has its political base in the south, Tamil recruits to the propaganda campaign were found wanting. The mass-media did attract a few to sing the praises of the late Mr. Bandaranaike. To prove their loyalties they would even condemn Valluvar, Kampan

and Navalar as reactionaries. The shift now is towards commending the policy of a liberalised economy and espousing the cause of 'Development'. The urge to emphasise the value of English (and to hell with Tamil) is another such trend.

All these tendencies remind one of an inter-national trade fair or its analogues. Each group has its stall and

its set of slogans. Their task is to sell their wares and influence people. And Jaffna more than any other region, has now become a free-trade zone for the assembly of imported ideologies. The classification into types need not be rigorous. Several stalls can be housed under one roof with conservative and militant slogans being two sides of the same coin. Barring the publicly committed, the lower-order salesmen

(Continued overleaf)

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The two-day token strike called by the Joint Committee of Plantation Trade Unions on the 11th and 12th of this month brought forth a heroic 80% to 90% response in many areas, according to a statement issued by the Hatton Joint Committee of Trade Unions and voluntary organizations. The biggest response came from the Kandy, Dickoya, Dimbulla, Sabaragamuwa and Uva areas.

Mr. Jeffrey Abeysekera in a signed statement sent to the *Saturday Review* says, "despite the fact that the majority of Trade Union membership of the plantation workers is claimed by the two government controlled Trade Unions, it is noteworthy and has deep political significance that thousands of such workers chose to ignore the orders received from Colombo and joined in this common struggle with their brothers and sisters in the plantations... this strike is clear evidence that the plantation sector workers staff are not ready to peacefully suffer exploitation any longer. If the government is sensitive to the reality of this token strike and at least pays heed to the reports received from Police Stations in the plantation areas, it would do well to respond seriously to the demands put forward by the strikers."

Mr. Robert Perera, President of the Estate Services Unions, 5th Floor, GCSU Building, Colombo in a statement sent to the *Saturday Review* says, "As far as the Plantation Workers are concerned it is needless to emphasise the great hardships they encounter as the meagre salary paid to them is hardly sufficient even to have one square meal a day. A male worker is being paid a daily

# The plight of the Plantation worker

wage of Rs. 16/- out of which Rs. 1/60 is deducted against a 10% being his contribution to the EPF. He receives Rs. 14/40. Most of the estates offer only 20 days work per month, and on this basis he receives a total monthly salary of Rs. 288/-. With the deduction of the festival advance he gets into his hands a paltry sum of Rs. 248/- with which he has to manage his family. Even the free medical aid given to the plantation worker is being gradually withdrawn; he is now compelled to buy drugs as the free grant given to estates based at 50 cents per head is hardly sufficient to buy even two tablets of aspirin.

## 2 - day token strike:

### A 'heroic response'

Rev. Pio Ciampa, S. J. Chairman, Estate People's Services, Balangoda writes:

Your news item about the Plantation Workers' Strike (S.R., 8-5-82, p.11) reminds the readers about the sad plight of the Plantation Workers.

The mass media announced "A dramatic wage increase of nearly 148% for men, 178%

for women and 194% for children".

Why then the strike?

The heartless logic of numbers and figures cannot deceive the workers involved in their daily slow agony.

In terms of hard cash, these high percentages, in dark daily realities, mean only:

Rs. 16.12 for men,  
Rs. 14.00 for women,  
Rs. 13.00 for children.

When one compares these lowest wages in the country with the cost of living index which has shot up by 407%, one understands why some Trade Unions called for a United Strike.

If the Plantation Workers' wages have increased by an average of 170% while the cost of living by 407%, then the Owners have condemned the Plantation Workers to a slow death by starvation.

"Election Year" should make JUSTICE more visible to the Plantation Workers.

Hon. Mr. S. Thondaman at Nuwara Eliya Triennial

Convention of the C.W.C. did say: "The failure to obtain the Rs. 70/- and later the Rs. 152/- increase granted to the other workers of the country unfortunately is causing concern and frustration and a feeling that discrimination was being perpetuated. We fail to see why workers should be denied a relief extended to the others". With and like Hon. S. Thondaman, many fail to see it. I too fail to see it.

On behalf of "Estate People's Services" with Mr.

Thondaman himself, I like to transmit his warning: "It would be blind folly to continue to deny the plantation workers their rightful dues or discriminate against them". Let quick action be taken and so prevent effectively future strikes. His Excellency the President himself is personally involved in such a delicate matter. "State Plantations" and "Janatha Development Plantations" are under his wings. His sense of justice and fairness to all should see that the anomaly be remedied immediately, especially with the approaching of "Election Time". Plantation Workers' Vote is precious."

## What is the Tamil problem?.....

(Continued from page 9)

could seek employment in any stall.

These observations are not the outcome of an exhaustive survey. Ability to collect inside information is the task of a probing journalist. The true character of what would appear as innocent organisations engaged in acts of charity, etc. could be thus revealed and their source of funds traced. But in the absence of such a journalistic tradition, it is left to the amateur free-lancer to say what he knows. Nor is it an aimless phenomenological enquiry. That would be to the taste of the dedicated academic who would heap paper upon paper to further promotion prospects.

What really provokes the above comments is the TULF slogan of a separate state. In the absence of a mass-movement it could be dismissed off as an election canard or is the task assumed by a few skilled marksmen? It could also be a second front in a skilled attempt to contain the Buddhist renaissance that has spilled over to become anti-Tamil. To the Big-Powers it may be a ploy to gain some point of entry. 'Eelam' may soothe the conscience of the expatriate who has opted for cooler climes.

Whatever the nature of the analysis, the national tasks of the Tamils needs to be clearly demarcated. Sinhalese statesmanship is yet to mature for us to think in all-Island terms. Till then, the need to look inwards and gain a clear conception of our problem demands our

undivided attention. Is the task a purely negative one—protesting against colonisation, the transfer of Sinhalese officials and policemen and agitating for the increased recruitment of Tamils into the Medical faculties etc.? Is the problem to be solved by exporting our youth, founding more tutories and the building of houses? Of equal importance is the added problem of the evil consequences of foreign remittances—the spread of consumerism and the emergence of a class of idlers parasitic upon the earnings of their bread-winners.

The TULF, that has gained a near monopoly of the leadership of the community does not appear to have addressed its mind to this problem nor does it seem to be aware of the nature of the drift of events. In the circumstances it becomes the duty of thinking sections to identify the nature of the problem and assess the magnitude of its scale in the task of suggesting solutions. Four hundred years of foreign rule makes the definition of Tamil identity imperative. Will this not help us to describe the nature of true freedom? One has to become conscious of ideals that are to spur Tamil society to greater heights and to instil an awareness of duties. How is the rising generation to be educated to accept its role in society? It's the answer to these and similar questions that will help revitalise existing institutions and the creation of new ones in the task of attaining specific objectives. Towards this end, this journal (*Saturday Review*) should become a convenient forum to promote a public discussion.

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**TELF meeting today**

THE THAMIL EELAM LIBERATION FRONT will hold a public meeting on May 22nd (today) at 6 p.m. at the Veerasingham Hall, Jaffna, to commemorate the Thamil Eelam National Heroes Day.

The meeting will be presided by its President Dr.

S. A. Tharmalingham, and the speakers include 1. Rev. Fr. Singarayar, 2. Mr. M. K. Eelaventhan (Organizing Secretary, TELF), 3. Mr. Kovai Mahesan (Editor, Suthanthiran), 4. Mr. Pon Poologasingham, and 5. Mr. K. N. Rasanayakam (President-Student Council, Jaffna University).

**Political Causerie . . . .**

(Continued from page 3)

Are some officials endeavouring to prove correct those critics of the UNP who are accusing it of trying to perpetuate the name of its leader at public expense at Kotte in a more enduring manner than achieved by any other recent national leader?

Now that Mr. Chandrananda de Silva has been ap-

pointed Commissioner of elections, displacing the Additional Secretary from the President's office who was put in charge after the premature retirement of the former Commissioner Mr. A. Piyasekera, opposition confidence in the electoral process should have been restored to a great degree. One of the new appointee's immediate tasks could be deciding who represents the Sri Lanka Freedom Party.

**G. C. S. U. to assist strike victims:**

**Initial help Rs. 300/-**

The Government Clerical Service Union decided at its Plenary Session held recently that all its members who have still not been reinstated after their "instant" dismissal for participating in the General strike of July, 1980, should be offered some measure of financial assistance in such a manner as the financial resources of the Union would permit. According to this decision, all such members are being paid an initial payment of Rs. 300/-. The quantum of future payments which will be made from time to time will be determined in each instance.

Resolutions were passed at the Sessions demanding the immediate reinstatement of all the strikers with back wages plus the additional increments granted to non-strikers.

It is understood from GCSU circles that while agitational action is being pursued to pressurise the Govt. to reinstate all strikers, steps are also being taken by the Committee for Workers Unity which was set up recently to build up a single National Democratic Workers' Council.

**Support for Paranthan strikers**

The provisional National Committee for the Mass Workers' Party which held the May Day Rally in Colombo together with the Ceylon Mercantile Union, Ceylon Estate Staffs' Union and the Ceylon Plantation Services Union expressed its complete solidarity with the struggle of the workers of the State controlled Chlorine/Caustic Soda Factory at Paranthan. The strike at the factory continues unbroken for the last six months led by the Ceylon Mercantile Union.

The joint May Day rally also called upon the government and the private employers to re-instate the thousands of workers who have still not been taken back to work after they were declared to have vacated their post in July 1980.

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# Saturday Review

SRI LANKA



## Jaffna undergraduates defy Police ban

Over 2000 undergraduates of the University of Jaffna defied a police ban on 17 May and marched through the streets demanding the release of fellow-undergraduate A. Vimalarasa.

The massive demonstration—the biggest in recent times, according to eye-witnesses—was the climax of a boycott campaign started by the undergraduates on 12 May to free Vimalarasa who is being held, without trial, at the Panagoda Army Camp since April 1981.

A police party intercepted the demonstrators near Jaffna MP V. Yogeswaran's house (burnt down last year by men in mufti before the

District Development Council elections) and wanted them to disperse. The undergraduates squatted down on the road and refused to budge. The police thereupon allowed the demonstrators to proceed.

**'Release Vimalarasa' call**

When the undergraduates were marching along Kankesanthurai Road, another police party tried to break it up by taking five students into custody.

This drew an immediate response: fellow-marchers refused to move till these students were released. For nearly half an hour traffic was blocked as student leaders parleyed with the police. Ultimately the police freed the students and the march got going again.

Undergraduate sources told the *Saturday Review* the demonstration was a success and had helped to focus public attention on the unfortunate Vimalarasa's plight. The sympathy of the public is completely with Vimalarasa, they said.

At the time of going to press, the undergraduates of the University of Jaffna continue to boycott lectures.

# Nagapattinam ship faces security torpedo

The government is not likely, for security reasons, to approve the Jaffna District Development Council's plan to start a passenger boat service between Kankesanthurai and Nagapattinam in South India, *Saturday Review* understands.

The DDC's Policy Statement of 12 May, referring to this scheme, says "The Development Council mooted a plan a few months back to launch a passenger boat service from Kankesanthurai to Nagapattinam in South India. This service will

cater to an ever increasing volume of traffic between these two countries. Clearance is being sought for this service. A limited liability Company will be floated for this purpose, with shares open to the public."

The District Council had also envisaged that "Kankesanthurai with its harbour, railhead and a network of roads would become a centre for tourist inflow" and wanted a duty free shop opened at Kankesanthurai to cater to this tourist traffic.

The Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali had earlier approved of the idea of a duty free shop at KKS as it could help to curb smuggling.

## North Indian shoppers cause travel block

A rush of tourists from India, especially North India, has compelled several Sri Lankans to postpone their trips to India.

Sri Lankans who wish to travel from Talaimannar to Rameshwaram by ferry have to book well in advance, as the ferry plies only thrice a week. Prospective passengers have first to collect tokens at the nearest railway station and call over later on the appointed day to buy the ticket. Each railway station has been allocated a certain number of tickets for this purpose.

Jaffna Railway Station, for instance, has been empowered to issue 50 tickets per trip: this means that every week 150 passengers can entrain from Jaffna to Rameshwaram.

Recently passengers who were told to collect their tickets on 20, 22 and 25

May respectively at the Jaffna Railway Station were later informed that tickets would be issued to them only on 27 and 29 May and 3 June.

The reason for this snarl-up, the *SATURDAY REVIEW* learns, is that recently about 1500 Indian Tourists had flown in to Sri Lanka to go on a shopping spree at the Kollupitiya duty-free shopping complex. They had planned to get back to India by ferry service, without being aware of the restrictions on the number of boat passengers. This had led to their being stranded at the Fort Railway Station. To clear the bottle-neck at the Fort, the railway authorities were forced to cut down on the number of tickets to India issued at the other railway stations.

## Library appeal from U. K Tamil group

The Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking Peoples (S.C.O.T.) based in London, U.K. has sent out an appeal for contributions towards the rebuilding and restoration of the Jaffna Public Library.

In the course of the appeal they state "Whilst the construction and building itself may not be a difficult task, re-equipping the library with the books and other material to restore it to its original standard requires very concentrated efforts. It is for this reason that in addition to financial contributions, we wish to hear from those who would like to assist with books, documentary material and equipment. Those who wish to assist in this regard are requested to write to the Secretary with details so that

suitable arrangements could be made for collection and despatch.

"Donations of monies in the form of cheques or postal orders should be drawn in favour of "SCOT-LIBRARY FUND" crossed and forwarded to our Treasurer whose address is 6 Merton Road, London SW 18 1QY."

The appeal has been signed by Mr. C. Kathiresan, President, of 299 Torbay Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA2 9QD, U.K., and the General Secretary Mr. R. Mahadava, 69 Streatfield Road, Harrow Middlesex HA3 9BP. Mr. N. S. Kandiah is the Treasurer.

## Cancer centre appeal

The Council for the establishment of Cancer Treatment Centre, Jaffna District has appealed for funds to complete the Centre's building at the Tellipallai Base Hospital.

A sum of Rs. 1 million is urgently needed to roof the second storey, and for the plastering.

Cheques should be drawn in favour of the Council for the Establishment of Cancer Treatment Centre, Jaffna District and sent either to the Joint Secretary Dr. S. Sabaratnam, No. 2, 1st Cross Street, Jaffna or the Treasurer Dr. M. Sundaralingam, No. 38, Kandy Road, Jaffna.

## Hatton National Bank gift

The Hatton National Bank will contribute Rs. 50,000 for the restoration of the Jaffna Public Library. The Manager of the Jaffna branch, Mr. M. Navaratnarajah will hand over a cheque for the amount to the Mayor of Jaffna, Mr. Rajah Visuvanathan, on Monday 24th May.